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12. *CETTIA MONTANA* VERSUS *C. FORTIPES*
(AVES: SYLVIINAE)

In Vol. **60** : 683, Dec. 1963 of this *Journal*, Biswas advocates changing the name *Cettia fortipes* to *C. montana* on grounds of priority. Ripley, in his supplement immediately following (p. 687-689), does not mention the point. It would thus appear that neither of these authors, nor the several others consulted by Biswas, is familiar with the facts in this case.

Earlier, Delacour had also used *montana* in a revision of *Cettia* in 1943. I, and doubtless others, called his attention early in 1946 to the fact that it is preoccupied; he published a correction (*Auk* **64** : 129, 1947), unfortunately without giving a bibliographic citation of the rather obscure first publication of the name.

The fact is that the name *Sylvia montana* Horsfield, 1821, given to a *Cettia*, is a homonym of the little-known *Sylvia montana* Wilson, 1812 (*American Ornithology* **5** : 113, pl. 44, fig. 2). It is thus still-born and can never be revived, even though Wilson's bird has never been satisfactorily identified. It has been considered a doubtful synonym of *Dendroica virens* (Gmelin) by Ridgway (*United States National Mus. Bull.* **50**, part 2 : 784, 1902), or a 'lost species' of Wood Warbler (Parulidae). In view of Wilson's care and accuracy, and of the strange hybrids and freaks in this family of birds that have recently been captured, it is not unthinkable that Wilson may have drawn certain of his plates from abnormal specimens or hybrids.

Be this as it may, the name *Cettia fortipes* (Hodgson), 1845, should stand, and the changes suggested by Biswas (loc. cit.) should not be made.

Another of Biswas' points (loc. cit., lines 13-12 from bottom) is not invariably correct. The type locality of a form is not automatically 'the place of origin of the first specimen (type)'. If an author has specimens from various places, all are equivalent cotypes unless his description or comments eliminate some from consideration as cotypes, or unless he *designates* one or more types. Biswas is correct, however, that the

locality of a mere sighting is ineligible, except in those rare cases where a species is described with no specimen in hand.

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ALLAN R. PHILLIPS

Dr. Biswas whose comments were invited writes :

When the homonymy between *Sylvia montana* Wilson, 1812, and *Sylvia montana* Horsfield, 1821, was discovered both nominal species had been transferred to different genera and there was no danger of confusion since at the time of discovery of the potential homonymy the two species are no longer included in same genus.

In his revision, Delacour (*Ibis* 85 : 27-29, 1943) used the name *Cettia fortipes* for the species and *montana* as the subspecific name of the Javan population. I have not seen Delacour's correction referred to, but apparently he did not think much about it, for in 1949, while giving me a copy of his *Cettia* paper, he himself changed *fortipes* to *montana* as the specific name (on p. 27 of the paper) and told me that *montana* was older. And, I find that even in the recent comprehensive work of Vaurie (BIRDS OF THE PALEARCTIC FAUNA : Passeriformes, pp. 223- 224, 1959), *Cettia montana* Horsfield has been retained. Ripley verbally informed me that he followed Delacour's paper in using the name *Cettia fortipes* for the species.

Regarding the second point, that is, about type-locality, my point is indeed invariably correct, for the place of origin of 'the type' (=type specimen=holotype) must necessarily be its type-locality. What Dr. Phillips says is also correct, but only in regard to syntypes from different localities, which does not arise here, for all the 'first specimens' (=syntypes) of *Graminicola bengalensis* were taken in Cachar.

B. BISWAS

[We might add that in a subsequent letter Dr. Phillips draws attention to Vaurie's using the name *Cettia montanus* in his BIRDS OF THE PALEARCTIC FAUNA and 'It now occurs to me that, by failing to mention Vaurie, I perhaps implied that the oversight was original with Biswas rather than general'—Eds.]